

# Dirty foot spas could face fines

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New state recommendations are aimed at Kara Gribble's neon-pink toenails.

As she got a pedicure from her sister at Bloomingnails Salon and Day Spa in Modesto, Gribble, 20, said she was encouraged by new state guidelines designed to improve pedicure safety.

"This is the second salon my sister has worked at, and they both seemed pretty clean," she said. "I would be more skeptical of going there if I didn't see them being real clean with everything."

The recommendations, announced Tuesday by the California Department of Consumer Affairs, go beyond Gribble's look test.

They include draining, scrubbing and disinfecting foot tubs after every pedicure. Violators could receive fines of \$500 or more and remedial training for finding a foot-spa chair out of compliance.

Health experts, industry officials and state regulators came up with the recommendations after forming a working group at Gov. Schwarzenegger's direction.

The governor formed the group after vetoing legislation last year by Assemblyman Leland Yee, D-San Francisco, to clean up unsanitary salons.

Yee's proposal was spurred by outbreaks and skin infections at foot spas in three Bay Area counties from 2000 to 2005.

Yee spokesman Adam Keigwin said the recommendations are a good start, but more can be done.

While the increased fines and cleaning standards have been implemented, he said, other recommendations will either be phased in over time or require new legislation.

"There's no way we can stop every single case, but we can stop the outbreaks," Keigwin said.

Yee's legislation would require salons with violations to post notices for their customers, Keigwin said. That would go beyond the state's recommendations.

But the state's recommendations, at least, didn't faze pedicurists such as Gribble's sister, Jennifer Hagar.

"There are way too many people who get fungus from salons that don't sanitize properly," she said. "I've heard a lot of horror stories."

She said she scrubs her foot tub after every customer and dips all the implements she uses in a hospital-grade disinfectant. She's confident that meets state requirements.

At Hair Craze salon in Modesto, pedicurist Allison Nguyen said she sprays all basins with warm water, uses soap and antibacterial solution after pedicures, and cleans her items with an alcohol solution.

"At the end of the day, I clean everything again," she said. "I have to with every client because of safety."

Kevin Flanagan, a spokesman for the California Department of Consumer Affairs, said most salons are safe even without the recommendations.

"We had just those three incidents, and there are probably about 38,000 nail salons in

California," he said, though he pointed out that not all of those perform pedicures. "It's a pretty large industry."

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